

## *Shepherd and Goatherd*

W. B. Yeats

1. *Shepherd*. That cry's from the first cuckoo of the year.
2. I wished before it ceased.

*Goatherd.* Nor bird nor beast

3. Could make me wish for anything this day,
4. Being old, but that the old alone might die,
5. And that would be against God's Providence.
6. Let the young wish. But what has brought you here?
7. Never until this moment have we met
8. Where my goats browse on the scarce grass or leap
9. From stone to stone.

*Shepherd.* I am looking for strayed sheep;

10. Something has troubled me and in my trouble  
11. I let them stray. I thought of rhyme alone,  
12. For rhyme can beat a measure out of trouble  
13. And make the daylight sweet once more; but when  
14. I had driven every rhyme into its place  
15. The sheep had gone from theirs.

*Goatherd.* I know right well

16. What turned so good a shepherd from his charge.  
17. *Shepherd.* He that was best in every country sport  
18. And every country craft, and of us all  
19. Most courteous to slow age and hasty youth,  
20. Is dead.

*Goatherd.* The boy that brings my griddle-cake

21. Brought the bare news.

# A Commentary on *Shepherd and Goatherd*

Seishi Matsuda

Written 22 Feb.-19 March 1918, and published in 1919. The first poem of the mourning sequence for the death of Robert Gregory, and also a dramatic representation of the poet's composite self, which concerns itself with the metaphysical as well as the physical, through the dialogue of 'Young Shepherd' and 'Old Goatherd'.

1. *cuckoo*: a migratory bird, the harbinger of spring, which is supposed here to have some significant characteristics to share with the dead hero ('No settled man,' 55 and 'Like the speckled bird,' 62), such as migration in place, transience in life and maybe wandering through some invisible world. For what did the shepherd wished on the cuckoo?

8. *browse* (*OED*): to crop the shoots and tender parts of rough plants for food: said of goats, deer, cattle. (Sometimes carelessly used for *graze*, but properly implying the cropping of scanty vegetation.)

11. *I thought of rhyme alone*. rhyme (*OED*): 1. 'The Shepherd...that same story told Which in *my former rhyme* I rehearsed' (Wordsworth) 2a. 'Whether in rhyme or blank verse' (Coleridge) 2b. 'To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet' (Keats) 3. 'Rhyme was never, properly speaking, in use in Anglo-Saxon poetry.' (T.Wright)/ 'His rhymes are very often made by...unimportant words, which disappoint the ear.' (Johnson)

12. *rhyme can beat a measure out of trouble*: beat a measure: beat an air. Cp. 43. 'I too have rhymed my reveries' [=composed my reveries in a verse]; 58. 'You have put the thought in rhyme [=in verse].'

17-18. *He that was best in every country sport/And every country craft*: cp. "In Memory of MRG," XIII & X.

*Shepherd.*

He had thrown the crook away

22. And died in the great war beyond the sea.

23. *Goatherd.* He had often played his pipes among my hills,

24. And when he played it was their loneliness,

25. The exultation of their stone, that cried

26. Under his fingers.

*Shepherd.*

I had it from his mother,

27. And his own flock was browsing at the door.

28. *Goatherd.* How does she bear her grief? There is not a shepherd

29. But grows more gentle when he speaks her name,

30. Remembering kindness done, and how can I,

31. That found when I had neither goat nor grazing

32. New welcome and old wisdom at her fire

33. Till winter blasts were gone, but speak of her

34. Even before his children and his wife?

35. *Shepherd.* She goes about her house erect and calm

36. Between the pantry and the linen-chest,

37. Or else at meadow or at grazing overlooks

38. Her labouring men, as though her darling lived,

39. But for her grandson now; there is no change

40. But such as I have seen upon her face

41. Watching our shepherd sports at harvest-time

42. When her son's turn was over.

*Goatherd.*

Sing your song.

43. I too have rhymed my reveries, but youth

44. is hot to show whatever it has found,

45. And till that's done can neither work nor wait.

46. Old goatherds and old goats, if in all else

23. Robert Gregory was shot down in battle over Italy on 23 January 1918.\*

23-26. *He had often played his pipes.../Under his fingers*: His musical talent as a pastoral piper is praised here, which is not mentioned in "Memory," and 'sorrowful, austere, sweet, lofty' tunes of his (l.57) were inspired by the local genius of the West of Ireland, corresponding with the loneliness and exultation of natural life among the hills and stones.

31. *I had neither goat nor grazing*: Jeffares (*A New Commentary*, 147) and Albright (*WBY: Poems*, 566) suggest that this may be a reference to the fact that Lady Gregory lent money to the poet in destitution so that he could give up journalism.

32. *New welcome and old wisdom at her fire*: Lady Gregory was hospitable to eminent visitors from abroad, such as artists, poets and scholars of fame, but to the tenants and labourers as well at Coole Park or around the area. The Goatherd remembers especially his days in need when he was newly welcomed to enjoy her company and to find her talk full of 'old wisdom.' Jeffares (147) and Albright (566) find here a reference to the fact that Lady Gregory and Yeats investigated and gathered up folklores in the West of Ireland.

35-38. *[She]...overlooks/Her labouring men, as though her darling lived*: She has taken over her son's routine of overlooking his labouring men and flock after he joined the army and went into battle on the continent, and continues doing it now he was killed, not for him, 'But for her grandson.'

46-48. *Old goatherds and old goats.../Are learned in waiting*: This ironical remark of Old Goatherd's notes the lack of patience in 'hasty youth' in general, but also implies the recklessness of a young hero who was so quick to risk his life to a premature death.

49. *gear*: household necessities and utensils in general, not for a par-

47. Youth can excel them in accomplishment

48. Are learned in waiting.

*Shepherd.*

You cannot but have seen

49. That he alone had gathered up no gear,

50. Set carpenters to work on no wide table,

51. On no long bench nor lofty milking-shed

52. As others will, when first they take possession,

53. But left the house as in his father's time

54. As though he knew himself, as it were, a cuckoo,

55. No settled man. And now that he is gone

56. There's nothing of him left but half a score

57. Of sorrowful, austere, sweet, lofty pipe tunes.

58. *Goatherd.* You have put the thought in rhyme.

*Shepherd.*

I worked all day,

59. And when 't was done so little had I done

60. That maybe 'I am sorry' in plain prose

61. Had sounded better to your mountain fancy.

[*He sings*]

62. 'Like the speckled bird that steers

63. Thousands of leagues oversea,

64. And runs or a while half-flies

65. On his yellow legs through our meadows,

66. He stayed for a while; and we

67. Had scarcely accustomed our ears

68. To his speech at the break of day,

69. Had scarcely accustomed to our eyes

70. To his shape at the rinsing-pool

71. Among the evening shadows,

ticular purpose.

49-53. *he alone had gathered up no gear...But left the house as in his father's time*: 'Robert Gregory was not immersed in domestic life or bound to the world — he was dispossessed from the beginning. Like the subjects of other elegies by Yeats, he had, even in life, something of the aspect of a disembodied spirit.' (Albright, 566)

54-55. *as though he knew himself, as it were, a cuckoo,/No settled man*: 'The cuckoo does not build a nest, but uses another bird's.' (Albright, 567)

61. *your mountain fancy*: your taste congenial to / cultivated by mountains and hills.

62. *the speckled bird*: the cuckoo (de Vries, 122). Here the shepherd (a Poet's Mask) sees in the dead hero as 'No settled man' a certain congeniality to the cuckoo because of their migration, or wandering and invisible identity. But his song does not give us any vivid image of the hero's personality; his figure is rather ambiguous, represented like a shadow of transience and mutability of life, evoked by the image of a migratory bird.

73-74. *on the day / When he came*: [Robert Gregory] Born in England, educated at Harrow and later at Oxford University. After his marriage in 1907, he lived much of his time at Coole Park with his wife and three children. But it is not clear when he first came to stay at Coole.

75. *You sing as always of the natural life*: 'the natural life' means the life in this world

80. *You have measured out the road*: You have marked the course [that the soul treads.]

83. *the first stupor of youth*: 'stupor', a kind of trance, which will lead one to a privileged experience of getting spiritual knowledge; in that state one could see a vision of another world or make contact with the



people from that world

88. *Seed-pods and flowers that are not all wild poppy*: not only seed-pods and flowers of wild poppy for pharmacy, but some arcane knowledge of 'the soul's journey' after death.

89-91. *He grows younger every second / That were all his birthdays reckoned / Much too solemn seemed*: He [that seemed much too solemn if all his birthdays were reckoned] grows younger every second; 'were all his birthdays reckoned' means 'considering his age when he passed so early from this world.'

96. *his own dayspring*: daybreak, or early dawn (here it points to the initial stage of 'his' life in Swedenborgian term)

97-99. *He unpacks the loaded pern... / Of all that he had made*: cp. 'When all works that have / From cradle run to grave / From grave to cradle run instead; / When thoughts that a fool / Has wound upon a spool / Are but loose thread, ...When cradle and spool are past / And I mere shade at last / Coagulate of stuff / Transparent like the wind...' ('The Fool by the Roadside,' 1-10.); cp. Yeats's note on 'unpacks the loaded pern': 'When I was a child at Sligo I could see above my grandfather's trees a column of smoke from "the pern mill," and was told that "pern" was another name for the spool, as I was accustomed to call it, on which thread was wound. One could not see the chimney for the trees, and the smoke looked as if came from the mountain, and one day a foreign sea-captain asked me if that was a burning mountain.' (CP:WBY, 531)

107-112. *Knowledge he shall unwind / Through victories of the mind... All knowledge lost in trance / Of sweeter ignorance*: cp. '...who knows no work can stand, / Whether health, wealth or peace of mind were spent / On master-work of intellect or hand, / No honour leave its monument, / Has but one comfort left: all triumph would / But break upon his



97. He unpacks the loaded pern  
98. Of all 'twas pain or joy to learn,  
99. Of all that he had made.  
100. The outrageous war shall fade;  
101. At some old winding whitethorn root  
102. He'll practise on the shepherd's flute,  
103. Or on the close-cropped grass  
104. Court his shepherd lass,  
105. Or put his heart into some game  
106. Till daytime, playtime seem the same;  
107. Knowledge he shall unwind  
108. Through victories of the mind,  
109. Till, clambering at the cradle-side,  
110. He dreams himself his mother's pride,  
111. All knowledge lost in trance  
112. Of greater ignorance.'  
113. *Shepherd.* When I have shut these ewes and this old ram  
114. Into the fold, we'll to the woods and there  
115. Cut out our rhymes on strips of new-torn bark  
116. But put no name and leave them at her door.  
117. To know the mountain and the valley have grieved  
118. May be a quiet thought to wife and mother,  
119. And children when they spring up shoulder-high.

(*The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*. Ed. Peter Allt and Russell Alspach. London: Macmillan, 1971, 338-343)

ghostly solitude.’ (“Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen,” I, 35-40) ‘Some Platonist affirms that in the station / Where we should cast off body and trade / The ancient habit sticks, / And that if our works could / But vanish with our breath / That were a lucky death, / For Triumph can but mar our solitude.’ (ibid, III, 14-20)

Yeats put Goatherd’s song in his note to explain the key concept and vision of life and death in *The Dreaming of the Bones*, his earliest play of ‘Dreaming Back’, written in the same year as “Shepherd and Goatherd.” (see *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats*, 777-778)

この劇 (*The Dreaming of the Bones*, 1919) の基本構想は、死者が自己の存在により深く関わった個人的な思想や行動を、一定の期間夢の中で生き直す、という世界的に流布した信仰に基づいている。

コーネリアス・アグリッパによれば、邪悪な者は自分が炎で焼き尽くされ、悪魔に虐げられる夢を見る。日本の「能」にこれとまったく同一の思想があり、ある女の霊は、道で出会った旅僧に勧められて、夢を信じなくなることによって炎から逃れようとする。私の劇の恋人たちは、これとは別の、しかし自ら作り出した良心の呵責の迷路に囚われ踏み迷っている。ユドワリ族 the Judwalis は「亡霊 Shade」と「霊的存在 Spiritual Being」を明確に区別している。前者は、出来事をその強度の高い順に夢によって生き直してゆき、より悲痛な、従ってより強烈な感情を伴う出来事が消尽されるにつれて、幸福になるのに対して、後者は出来事を起こった順序に従って生き直すが、この現世の出来事の生き直しは、それを生起させた道徳的・知的起源を探求するためのものである。

アラビア語の用語で言えば、あらゆる〈太陽性の人間 solar natures〉は、現世においてはより客観的な形態の経験に向かうのに対して、〈太陰性の人間 lunar natures〉はより主観的な形態の経験に向かう。〈太陰性の人間〉は死後、知的序列を逆転してつねに客観的経験に接近するようになり、霊的世界においてはそれが英知となるのに対して、〈太陽性の人間〉

は、可能な限り主観的経験の極致に向かって徐々に上昇して行く。霊的世界においては主観性はすなわち無垢であり、現世においては偶然の所産であった無垢が、知性の最高の達成なのである。こういう思想を私はすでに詩によって表現している。(以下に「山羊飼いの歌」が引用される。なお下線は引用者。)

Another form of similar thought about the soul's journey after death is found in his essay, "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" (1914):

'...there [in another world after death] as here [in this world] we do not always know all that is in our memory, but at need angelic spirits who acts upon us there as here, widening and deepening the consciousness at will, can draw forth all the past, and make us live again all our transgressions and see our victims "as if they were present, together with the place, words, and motives"; ...suddenly, as when a scene bursts upon the "sight" and yet continues "for hours together", and like the transgressions, all the pleasures and pains of sensible life awaken again and again, all our passionate events rush up about us and not as seeming imagination, for imagination is now the world...' (WBY, *Explorations*, 35)

117. *the mountain and the valley have grieved*: this is not intended as a personification of 'the mountain and the valley,' because the mountain and the valley themselves are animate and part of the climate and communal life of Coole Park, and therefore the death of the young hero means the loss of a nature closely knitted into them. The Shepherd and the Goatherd are in a sense their agents, and accordingly the mourning and elegy for him should be anonymous. Cf. '...when he played it was their [=my hills'] loneliness, / The exultation of their stone that cried / Under his fingers.' (24-26); '...Cut our rhymes on strips of new-

torn bark / But put no name....' (115-116) ; and also cp. Unterecker: 'The poem...is an effort to integrate through traditional imagery "the mountain and the valley" and so reveal not only Goatherd and Shepherd...mourning the death of Robert Gregory, but all of that nature Robert had given tongue to....' (*A Reader's Guide to W. B. Yeats*, 137)

119. *they spring up shoulder-high*: they are grown-up; 'spring up' is likely to be associated with the 'dayspring' (96) from which their life initiates its course.

\* The mourning sequence for the death of Robert Gregory is as follows: "Shepherd and Goatherd" (March 1918), "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (June 1918), "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" (1918), and "Reprisals" (late 1920).

Robert Gregory (1881-1918) Born in England, educated at Harrow and later at Oxford University. After his marriage in 1907, he lived much of his time at Coole Park with his wife and three children. In 1915 he joined the army as a second lieutenant in the 4th Connaught Rangers. Later, he joined the Royal Flying Corps and rose to the rank of temporary major. On 23 January 1918 he was shot down in error—according to the records of the Royal Flying Corps—while returning to the base in northern Italy. Robert was a promising painter and an able sportsman, excelling at cricket, boxing, rifle shooting, and horse riding. He had a generous nature, keen intelligence, and a deep love of Ireland. (see more in detail Sam McCready, *A WBY Encyclopedia*, 172-3)

## 羊飼いと山羊飼

羊飼　あれは郭公の声だ、今年初めて鳴いたぞ。

鳴きやまぬうちに、僕は願を掛けた。

山羊飼

鳥とか獣とかに

願掛けしようとはまったく思わんな、このごろは。

年を取ったのでな。老人だけが死ぬようにとでも願いたいところだが、そんな願いは神様の摂理に反するだろうしな。

願掛けは若い者がすればいい。しかし、どうしてお前はここへ来たのだ？

ついぞこんなところで会った覚えはないがなあ、

わしの山羊が乏しい草を囓り、岩場をひょいひょい飛び歩いている  
こんなところで。

羊飼

迷った羊を探してるんですよ。

ちょっと気に掛かることがあって、考え込んでるうちに

何頭かいなくなってしまった。歌のことで頭が一杯だったんです。

歌を作って悩みから抜け出すことであれば、

昼間の光がまた気持ちよく感じられるようになりますからね。ところが、

韻を踏む言葉がすべてぴたりと決まったと思ったら、

羊たちがいるはずの場所に、いなくなってたんですよ。

山羊飼

なるほどなあ、

それでこういう立派な羊飼いでも、見張りがお留守になったってわけか。

羊飼　あらゆる田舎のスポーツ、田舎のあらゆる技術に

通曉していたあの人、鈍重な年寄りにも、短気な若者にも

この上なく礼儀正しかったあの人が

お亡くなりになりました。

山羊飼

パンケーキを届けてくれる子どもが、

羊飼いの曲がった杖を捨てて、  
海の方この大戦でお亡くなりになったのです。

山羊飼いの わしのいる丘野辺で、あの人はよく笛を吹いていたなあ。  
彼が笛を吹くと、丘の寂しさと 丘の石の歓喜が、彼の指づかいに應えて  
声を上げたものだった。

山羊飼　大奥様の悲しみは、如何ばかりであろう？羊飼いなら誰でも、お名前を口に出しただけで、頂いたご親切が思い出され、この上なく心がなごむはず。わしとても同じこと、山羊もおらず食べさせる草もないそういう時節に、初めて暖炉のそばにお招き下さり、あの方の知恵の恵みに預かせて頂きながら、冬の木枯らしが去るまで過ごさせてもらったのだからな、ご子息のお子様や奥様よりもなによりも、まず大奥様のことを言わずにはいられないのだよ。

山羊飼い                      お前の歌を聞かせてくれたまえ。

わしも自分の夢を歌にしてはおるが、若い者は  
何にせよ、見つけたものを見せたくてうずうずしてるだろう。  
見せてしまうまでは仕事が手に付かんし、待ってもいられまい。

老いぼれの山羊飼いや老いぼれの山羊は、  
何をやっても若い者には勝てんが、  
辛抱強く待つことはできるからな。

羊飼 い

きっとお気づきだったでしょうが、

ご子息だけは、家財道具をいっさい取り揃えようとはなさらなかった。  
大工を入れて、大きなテーブルや長椅子を作らせることも、  
梁の高い搾乳小屋を修理させることも、いっさいなさらなかった。  
世間の人が、初めて財産を受け継ぐとよくやるのとは違って、  
館を父上様ご在世の頃そのままにしておかれました。  
いわば郭公鳥さながらに、ここに腰を落ち着ける者でないことを  
ご存じだったようですね。お亡くなりになった今、  
形見と言っては、哀しくて質朴な、甘美で気品のある笛の調べが、  
十曲ぐらいあるだけ。

山羊飼 い　そういう思いを、お前は歌にこめたのだな。

羊飼 い

丸一日苦勞して、

やっと仕上げはしましたが、出来栄はお恥ずかしいかぎり。  
いっそ「お悔やみ申し上げます」と、一言であっさりとすました方が、  
あなたのような山びとの気持には、ぴったりくるでしょうね。

〔歌う〕

波路はるか　大海原を渡り来て、  
黄色い足で　わが草原を駆けめぐり、  
しばしはまた　低く飛び行く  
あのまだらの鳥さながらに、  
彼のこの地に宿りしは　束の間。  
夜明けに語る彼の声、  
われら聞き慣れるいとまもなく、  
夕暮れの影迫る頃　洗い場にその姿、  
われら見慣れるいとまもなくて、

忽然と彼は この世から姿を消した。

彼が来たあの日にこそ、

願を掛ければよかったものを。

人間とは愚かなもの。

山羊飼い お前は相変わらず、自然のいのちのことを歌うのだな。

わしも若い頃そういう歌を作っていたので、

今聞いているとあの若旦那や、

亡くなったわしの仲間たちのことが偲ばれるなあ。

羊飼い あなたはこの禿げ山の尾根で、

魂が、われわれの目に見えなくなった後、

通ってゆく道筋を見極めたことがあるそうですね。

噂によれば、亡霊と話をしたこともあるとか。

山羊飼い

そうとも、

若い頃初めて昏睡状態に陥った時から、毎日思いを凝らして  
山羊の足では見つからない道を見つけてきたのだ。

羊飼いそれを歌って下さいよ。思いを凝らして

探し当てられた薬草が、僕たちの悲しみを

やわらげてくれるかもしれないから。

山羊飼い

あの尾根でわしが思いを凝らして得たものは、

野生の芥子の莢や花だけではないのだ。

[歌う]

彼は 刻一刻と若返る、早々と世を去ったその年の割には、

あまりに謹厳すぎるように見えた その彼が。

夢見てきたことのすべて、身を捧げた

大いなる志ゆえに、あまりに謹厳で

控えめすぎるように見えた その彼が。

おのがいのちの黎明に向かう旅路を

軽やかに辿りつつ



彼は苦痛と喜びをもって学んだすべてのこと、  
作りなしたすべてのものを巻きつけた  
糸巻きを巻き戻してゆくのだ。  
あの非道な戦争の記憶も薄らぐだろう。  
曲がったサンザシの老木の根元に座って、  
羊飼いの笛を稽古し、  
刈り込んだ芝草の上で  
羊飼いの娘に恋を語り、  
やがて何かの遊びに夢中になって、  
昼間の時間と遊びの時間が一つにとけあうようになる。  
精神の獲得した数々の勝利をたどりなおし、  
彼はすべての知識を巻き戻してしまうのだ。  
そして遂には、ゆりかごの縁に這い上りながら、  
おのれ自身が母の誇りであることを夢みるに至る  
すべての知識は消失する、  
いっそう甘美な無知の恍惚のうちに。

羊飼い この雌羊たちとこの老いた雄羊を  
柵の中に追い込んでから、二人で森に行きましょう。  
そして木の皮を剥いで、僕たちの歌を刻みつけ、  
名前は書かないで、あの方の館の入り口に置きましょう。  
山と谷が悲しんだことが分かれば、  
奥様や母上様、そして大きくなられた時  
お子様たちの慰めになるかもしれません。

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